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ABSTRACT

Since 73% of the Navajo children entering school do not speak English well enough to complete a regular course of study, the academic curricula of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) reservation schools is concerned primarily with acquisition of English as a second language. Programs developed and implemented specifically for Navajo students are the Consultants in Total Education (CITE) and the Navajo Area Language Arts Program (NALAP). Developed under the auspices of Title I of the Elementary Secondary Education Act (ESEA), CITE is highly structured and prescriptive in its attempts to promote English oral and written expression. Presenting grammatical structures based on a sequence suitable to Navajo students, NALAP allows students to internalize English language structures and promotes small group and individualized instruction. Emphasizing developmental programs at the primary levels and remedial programs at the middle and upper levels, the 1973-74 Title I project expenditures totaled more than $7.9 million with language arts/reading receiving 80%, mathematics 3.5%, special education 9.9%, and general academics .1%. During 1973-74, student growth in language arts and math was equivalent to 7 months and 1.1 years respectively. Current Title I data indicate a major trend toward individualizing academic instruction for Navajo students. (JC)

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COMPENSATORY EDUCATION ON THE NAVAJO RESERVATION

by

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The Navajo Reservation, which stretches across a geographical area comparable in size to the state of West Virginia, embraces 25,000 square miles of desert and mountainous terrain, from northeastern New Mexico, across Arizona, and north into the state of Utah. Recent census reports (January 1974) indicate that there are approximately 139,248 Navajos.

The Navajo Reservation has been designated by the United States Department of Commerce as an economically depressed area. Although there is some industry on the Reservation, the average annual family income is less than $2,000.00. Navajo people live primarily in log hogans with mud chinking, or in small wooden frame structures. Electricity and running water are virtually non-existent in most of the homes. Economic sustenance is scratched from the land, grazing small flocks of sheep and cattle, and from native arts and crafts. Navajos are renowned for their finely, handwoven rugs and handcrafted silver and turquoise jewelry.

Navajo students attend either public schools, private mission schools, or schools operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). There are three schools contracted to Navajo Communities. The Bureau school system may be paralled to that of a metropolitan area serving a comparable number of students, approximately 20,000. The primary differences between schools in a metropolitan area and BIA schools on the Navajo Reservation are seen in the type of school system, the number of miles separating the schools, and the distances which students live from the schools. The schools in a large metropolitan area usually serve students who are native speakers of English, reside within the areas con-

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tiguous to the school, and attend school on a daily basis. Due to its vastness, the Navajo Reservation is divided into five agencies, each of which is responsible for the education of the students who reside within the boundaries of the agency. The Navajo Area Division of Education, located in Window Rock, Arizona is responsible for overseeing curriculum development and program implementation within the Agency schools.

Unlike academic programs, which reflect the values of a middle class American society, of students residing within the hard core areas of the inner city, academic programs in B.I.A. schools on the Navajo Reservation are designed to meet the unique academic needs manifested by Navajo students. The schools are primarily boarding schools which provide total academic and guidance programs on a twenty-four (24) hour basis, and serve students who are unable to attend public schools or community day schools due to family problems, the distances which students reside from schools, and road conditions. The majority of the roads on the Navajo Reservation are dirt roads impassable during the heavy snowfalls of winter and the spring thaw.

Navajo people are primarily mono-lingual speakers of Navajo, therefore, students entering school at six years of age often speak little or no English. Spolsky states that seventy-three percent (73%) of Navajo six year olds entering school do not speak English sufficiently to participate in first grade and to complete the course of study required of them. He also concluded that two major considerations may be attributed to the degree of Navajo spoken by the students when they enter schools, namely the distance and location of a school from an off reservation town, and the distance students reside from a school.[1]

Academic curricula of Bureau of Indian Affairs schools on the Navajo Reservation, therefore, is concerned primarily with the acquisition of English as a Second Language. Students are involved in academic and guidance programs especially intended to enrich their vast cultural experiences, and to complement their interests, needs, and talents. Language Arts curricula for Navajo students are based on a continuum of learning experiences representative

[1]Spolsky Bernard, "Navajo Language Maintenance: Six Year Olds in 1969", March 1970, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

of the hierarchy of language skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Programs developed and implemented specifically for Navajo students are the CITE program (Consultants in Total Education) developed by Robert Wilson, Los Angeles, California, and NALAP (Navajo Area Language Arts Program) developed by Navajo Area Curriculum Specialists.

The CITE program was developed under the auspicies of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 1965 for students in Beginner class, now equivalent to Kindergarten in a metropolitan school system through third grade. The Beginners and First grade programs are designed to expose Navajo students to a total academic curriculum, through the Language Arts. Programs for second and third grades concentrate in the Language Arts and are complemented by specialized curriculum materials in the Social Sciences and other content areas. The objective of the CITE program is to enable Navajo students to understand and generate English language sentence structures in both oral and written expression, as would a native speaker of English after four years of exposure to the program. To accomplish this feat, the students are exposed to the phonology, morphology, lexicon, and syntax of the English language through structured and sequenced materials which teach the students the mechanics of learning in an individualized and unstructured manner; subject content areas; and the transfer and application of learning to other situations. The CITE program is highly structured. Lesson plans are prescriptively phrased and based on the need for cooperative planning by the teacher and education aide, in maximizing the effects of a team effort.

NALAP, too, is a structured, sequential program designed to develop competence in the English language. The program, an outgrowth of requests by B.I.A. teachers on the Navajo Reservation, presents grammatical structures based on a sequence suitable to Navajo students involved in the acquisition of English as a Second Language. NALAP materials are based on a continuum of structural objectives in English language skills. Unlike the CITE program, which is highly prescriptive, teachers possess the freedom to prescribe methods and techniques which allow students to internalize English language structures. Student involvement on an individualized and small group basis, in experiencing innumerable language activities, enables them to capitalize on the thought processes involved in language.

Criterion referenced tests, developed for each of the above programs, in part under the auspices of ESEA, Title I, are designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the programs in attaining their stated objectives.

Program development on the Navajo Reservation has been positively affected by the implementation of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. All Navajo students in BIA schools are eligible for Title I services since they are educationally deprived and reside in an economically depressed area. Therefore, each of the sixty (60) BIA schools on the reservation, is involved in the implementation of a Title I project in one or more of the following basic academic areas of Language Arts, Reading, and Mathematics, and Special Education.

Project emphasis in the primary grades is on developmental programs for selected target students designed to complement regular classroom instruction in meeting the students' most critical needs in the subject areas noted above. Developmental programs are aimed at preventing academic deficiencies in Navajo students. Remedial programs are the basis for Title I project development in the middle and upper grade levels. Title I projects do not consider the remediation of students' lesser needs in other subject areas, until the students' most critical needs have been met.

Navajo education aides are a component part of each of the Title I projects in which they may function in self contained classrooms, continuous progress situations, Special Education programs or in Reading and Mathematics resource rooms to assist in the individualization of instructional activities. The education aides, who have been trained in program implementation, assist professional personnel by interpreting English language concepts into Navajo to facilitate students' understanding.

Under the auspices of Title I, special education programs on the Navajo Reservation, are conducted for trainable and educationally handicapped students and for students who exhibit Learning Disabilities. The Special Education programs are provided assistance by the University of Northern Colorado, Northern Arizona University, and Eastern New Mexico University. Each university complements the leadership and training provided by BIA Special Education personnel to staff members in the development

and implementation of special education programs and in developing individualized instructional materials unique to the needs of Navajo students. Special Education classes provide a small teacher-pupil ratio essential to the academic development of each student in visual and auditory perceptual development, psycho-motor development, and language and mathematical concept development for Learning Disabilities classes, and total program implementation in trainable and educationally handicapped classes.

An integral part of all Title I projects is the establishment of a Parent Advisory Council at each school to work with the school's total academic staff in assessing students' academic deficiencies, establishing priorities, and in developing, implementing and evaluating programs for Navajo students. Parental involvement is of utmost importance to the effectiveness of Title I and regular program implementation to foster an improved attitude among students toward academic achievement. Parents involved as Parent Advisory Council members play an important role in maintaining liaison with the school community to develop further parental understanding of Title I as it effects the total education of their children.

Title I projects in all schools on the Navajo Reservation served a total of 11,740 students in grades kindergarten through twelve (K-12), during the 1973-1974 school year. The total expenditure in approved projects was greater than $5.5 Million. Student growth in the academic areas of Language Arts (Reading) and Mathematics was equivalent to 7 months and 1.1 years growth respectively, according to grade equivalent scores. Normal expected gain without Title I services is equivalent to four (4) months and five (5) months in each area.

Students enrolled in special education programs, the evaluation of which is based on the attainment of specific behavioral objectives, in general surpassed the number of individual objectives outlined in each project. Growth without Title I would have been negligible as determined by past pupil performance.

The percentages illustrated in figure 1, indicate the amounts of money budgeted for direct instructional services for Navajo students, under the auspices of Title I, during the 1973-1974 school year. The percentages do not reflect the amounts budgeted for evaluation, dissemination, parent council, in-service training and program administration.

The average expenditure per child in each of the academic areas noted above is as follows:

Language Arts/Reading	$ 425.00
Special Education	$ 750.00
General Academic	$ 361.00
Mathematics	$ 183.00
Other Academic Areas	$ 61.00

Data extracted from approved Title I projects for the 1974-1975 school year indicates a major trend toward individualizing academic instruction for Navajo students. Approved Title I projects on the Navajo Reservation total more than $7.9 Million.

The total education of Navajo youth is a primary concern of the Navajo Area Division of Education of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Giant steps have been taken in the areas of curriculum development and in the implementation of specialized programs under the auspices of Title I and regular program development, the ultimate goal of which is to enable Navajo students to function competently in the society which they choose — that of life on the Navajo Reservation or living in off reservation towns and other geographic areas in the United States.

Teachers, parents and students have recognized the need for change in educational programming to enable each child to progress toward the attainment of his finest moment. Programs will continue to change as long as there are students who demonstrate new needs and educators willing to accept the challenge to meet students' needs.